

## Message Text

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ACTION SCI-06

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ISO-0\* NSF-04 ACDA-19 CIAE-00 INR-10

IO-14 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 RSC-01 SCEM-02 PA-04 PRS-01

USIA-15 PM-07 EB-11 COME-00 DRC-01 /134 W

----- 112400

R 281828Z DEC 73

FM AMEMBASSY LONDON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6721

INFO USAEC WASHDC

USMISSION EC BRUSSELS

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: OVIP (DOUB, COMMISSIONER WILLIAM O.), TECH, ENRG

SUBJECT: VISIT TO LONDON

REF: A) LONDON 14800, B) LONDON 1417

BEGIN SUMMARY

VISIT OF AEC COMMISSIONER DOUB, DIRECTOR OF REACTOR SAFETY RESEARCH (DR. KOUTS) AND COMMISSIONER'S TECHNICAL ASSISTANT (DR. MURLEY) TO LONDON DECEMBER 18-21 WAS EXTREMELY USEFUL AND TIMELY. VISIT COINCIDED WITH CLEAR STATEMENT TO PARLIAMENTARY SELECT COMMITTEE ON SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY BY CHAIRMAN, CENTRAL ELECTRICITY GENERATING BOARD (HAWKINS) OF CEGB PREFERENCE FOR U.S. LIGHT WATER REACTORS. THIS STATEMENT LED DEPARTMENT OF TRADE AND INDUSTRY SCIENTIFIC ADVISER, IN CHARGE OF NUCLEAR INSPECTORATE (WILLIAMS), TO RESERVE HIS POSITION ON SAFETY OF THESE REACTORS IN STATEMENT TO SAME COMMITTEE ON FOLLOWING DAY. COMMISSIONER DOUB HELD PRESS CONFERENCE WHICH LARGELY DEVOTED TO ASPECTS OF LWR SAFETY, APPEARED BEFORE GROUP OF CONSERVATIVE MPS INTERESTED IN ENERGY, AND HAD FRANK AND CORDIAL DISCUSSIONS WITH REPRESENTATIVES OF CEGB, THE U.K.

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ATOMIC ENERGY AUTHORITY, BRITISH NUCLEAR FUELS AND THE

NATIONAL NUCLEAR CORPORATION. FOUNDATION FOR FUTURE EXCHANGES BETWEEN AEC AND UK AGENCIES ON SAFETY OF LWR'S WERE LAID. WE RECOMMEND THAT AEC BE PREPARED TO SEND ADDITIONAL TEAM TO LONDON IN SECOND HALF OF JANUARY IF ONE IS REQUIRED TO COVER POINTS THAT MAY ARISE BEFORE GOVERNMENT MAKES DECISION ON NEXT REACTOR PURCHASE.  
END SUMMARY

1. DOUB PARTY VISIT TO LONDON DECEMBER 18-22 WAS ORIGINALLY ARRANGED IN RESPONSE TO INVITATION FROM CONSERVATIVE RESEARCH DEPARTMENT TO PARTICIPATE IN SEMINAR FOR CONSERVATIVE MP'S INTERESTED IN ENERGY WITH REPRESENTATIVES OF BRITISH UKAEA WHO WOULD DESCRIBE AGR, AND REPRESENTATIVES OF CANADIAN UTILITIES TO COVER CANDU. IN THE EVENT, THE TURN OUT OF MP'S ON DECEMBER 19 WAS DISAPPOINTINGLY SMALL, LARGELY BECAUSE THE SEMINAR COINCIDED WITH THE APPEARANCE OF E.C. WILLIAMS, THE SCIENTIFIC ADVISER TO THE DEPARTMENT OF TRADE AND INDUSTRY IN CHARGE OF NUCLEAR INSPECTORATE BEFORE THE SELECT COMMITTEE ON SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY. NEVEHTHELESS, THE SESSION WITH EIGHT MP'S WAS HELPFUL IN THAT COMMISSIONER DOUB WAS ABLE TO MAKE A CLEAR SUMMARY OF U.S. EXPERIENCE WITH THE LWR FOLLOWING WHICH HE AND HIS TEAM REPLIED TO SOME SEARCHING AND WELL-INFORMED QUESTIONS. AS A RESULT OF THIS SESSION, NO MEMBER OF BRITAIN'S MAJORITY PARTY SHOULD BE ABLE TO COMPLAIN THAT HE HAS NOT HAD AN OPPORTUNITY TO DISCUSS ANY ASPECT OF LWR'S AT FIRSTHAND WITH MEMBERS OF THE AEC.

2. THIS FEATURE OF THE COMMISSIONER'S VISIT WAS NECESSARILY OVERSHADOWED BY THE APPEARANCE ON DECEMBER 18 OF ARTHUR HAWKINS, CHAIRMAN OF CEGB BEFORE THE PARLIAMENTARY SELECT COMMITTEE. HAWKINS TESTIFIED THAT THE CEGB EXPECTS TO ORDER NINE NEW NUCLEAR STATIONS BETWEEN 1974 AND 1979 AND A FURTHER NINE BETWEEN 1980-83. ALL BUT THREE OF THE 18 STATIONS TO BE ORDERED BY 1983 WILL PROBABLY BE U.S. LIGHT WATER REACTORS "PREFERABLY THE PRESSURIZED WATER REACTOR." THE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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FOLLOWING DAY WILLIAMS TESTIFIED BEFORE THE SAME COMMITTEE AND MADE THREE POINTS. FIRST, OFFICIAL COMMUNICATION BETWEEN THE INSPECTORATE AND THE CEGB ON THE TYPE OF REACTOR TO BE PURCHASED HAD BEEN LIMITED TO A BRIEF LETTER RELATING TO AN APPLICATION FOR PLANNING PERMISSION FOR LWR'S AT SIZEWELL, THE PREFERRED SITE FOR THE CEGB'S NEXT REACTOR. THE CEGB SAID WILLIAMS "HAS HAD NO ASSURANCE OF THE LICENSE"

FROM THE INSPECTORATE. WILLIAMS CONTINUED, "THE ONLY  
ADVICE I HAVE GIVEN THE MINISTER IS THAT IT WOULD  
TAKE ME QUITE A LONG TIME TO FORMULATE MY ADVICE."  
SECOND, WILLIAMS TOLD THE COMMITTEE HE HAD NEVER UNDER-  
STOOD THAT THERE WAS AN "OFF THE SHELF REACTOR" AVAIL-  
ABLE, EVEN IN THE U.S., WHICH IMPLIED THAT DELIVERY

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DEADLINES MIGHT NOT BE MET. THIRD, HE SAID THAT THE  
MOST CRUCIAL RESERVATION HE HAD ABOUT LWR'S WAS THE  
INTEGRITY OF THE PRESSURE VESSEL AROUND THE REACTOR.  
UPON RECEIVING A DESIGN, HE WOULD WISH TO START FROM  
SCRATCH AND DECIDE FOR HIMSELF WHETHER HE COULD ACCEPT  
THE ASSUMPTION THAT A CATASTROPHIC FAILURE OF PRESSURE  
VESSEL WAS INDEED AN "INCREDIBLE" ACCIDENT. A SECOND  
QUESTION CONCERNED THE EMERGENCY CORE COOLING SYSTEM;  
A THIRD QUESTION THE RELIABILITY OF THE EMERGENCY  
SHUTDOWN SYSTEMS. (DETAILS OF HAWKINS' AND WILLIAMS'  
TESTIMONY BEING REPORTED BY AIRGRAM AS SOON AS TRANS-  
SCRIPT AVAILABLE.)

3. QUESTIONS BASED ON WILLIAMS' TESTIMONY OCCUPIED  
MUCH OF PRESS CONFERENCE COMMISSIONER DOUB AND PARTY

HELD ON DECEMBER 20. COMMISSIONER ADOPTED FRANK, MATTER OF FACT APPROACH WHICH HAD GREAT EFFECT ON CORRESPONDENTS WE BELIEVE HIS CONFIDENCE AND THE TECHNICAL COMPETENCE OF HIS TEAM DID MUCH TO DISPEL ANY DOUBTS OF INFORMED CORRESPONDENTS REGARDING LWR SAFETY. (NOTICES OF PRESS CONFERENCE BEING REPORTED BY AIRGRAM.)

4. IN MEETINGS WITH WILLIAMS AND A MEMBER OF THE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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CEGB (PEDDIE), AEC REPRESENTATIVES LAID MUCH STRESS ON THEIR WILLINGNESS TO CONTINUE TO PROVIDE FULL INFORMATION ON ALL ASPECTS OF LWR'S, PARTICULARLY SAFETY. WILLIAMS WAS MUCH LESS CATEGORIC IN PRIVATE CONVERSATION WITH AEC REPRESENTATIVES THAN HE APPARENTLY HAD BEEN WITH SELECT COMMITTEE AND SAID IN EFFECT THAT HIS TESTIMONY SHOULD BE REGARDED ONLY AS RESERVING THE POSITION OF THE NUCLEAR INSPECTORATE FOLLOWING THE FLAT PUBLIC STATEMENT OF INTENT BY THE CEGB. IN HIS CONVERSATIONS WITH WILLIAMS AND SUBSEQUENTLY WITH OTHER U.K. OFFICIALS, COMMISSIONER DOUB EMPHASIZED HIS HOPE THAT IF THE DECISION OF HMG WENT AGAINST THE LWR THAT IT BE EXPLAINED FOR REASONS OTHER THAN THE BRITISH UNCERTAINTIES WITH REGARD TO THE SAFETY OF THESE REACTORS. HE NOTED THAT A LARGE NUMBER OF LWR'S WERE IN SERVICE IN THE U.S. AND ELSEWHERE AND THAT BRITISH REJECTION OF THE LWR ON THE GROUNDS OF SAFETY COULD HAVE THE MOST SERIOUS REPERCUSSIONS IN THESE AREAS. THIS POINT WAS CLEARLY UNDERSTOOD BY THE BRITISH OFFICIALS WITH WHOM HE RAISED IT.

5. IN LATER CONVERSATION WITH PEDDIE OF CEGB, KOUTS SUGGESTED THAT THE AEC WRITE LETTERS TO WILLIAMS, SIR JOHN HILL, CHAIRMAN OF UKAEA, PEDDIE OF CEGB AND STEWART OF NATIONAL NUCLEAR CORPORATION OFFERING TO CONTINUE FULL AND FRANK EXCHANGE OF ALL INFORMATION WITH REGARD TO REACTOR SAFETY. THIS WOULD BE DONE IN THE HOPES THAT JOINT VISITS MIGHT BE ARRANGED TO THE U.S. AT LEAST FOR THE LAST THREE, AND, IF NECESSARY, SEPARATELY FOR WILLIAMS IN ORDER TO PRESERVE THE NEUTRALITY OF HIS POSITION. PEDDIE SUPPORTED THIS IDEA. PEDDIE ALSO SUGGESTED THAT AN OPPORTUNITY BE FOUND FOR AEC TO MAKE A STATEMENT TO THE EFFECT THAT IT IS CONTINUING TO PROVIDE ALL POSSIBLE INFORMATION TO THE AUTHORITIES OF OTHER GOVERNMENTS AND UT-LITY COMPANIES, INCLUDING THE U.K. PEDDIE SAID HE THOUGHT IT MOST IMPORTANT TO OVERCOME ANY INFERENCE THAT THE AEC MIGHT BE HOLDING SOMETHING BACK. KOUTS AGREED AND SAID THIS WOULD BE LOOKED INTO.

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ACTION SUGGESTED: (A) WE SUPPORT DR. KOUTS'S PROPOSAL (PARA 4) REGARDING EXCHANGES WITH WILLIAMS, HILL, STEWART AND PEDDIE. WE WOULD BE GLAD TO FORWARD LETTERS, AND IN ANY CASE WOULD APPRECIATE COPIES.

(B) WE BELIEVE STATEMENT AS SUGGESTED BY PEDDIE (PARA 5) WOULD BE HELPFUL. WE BELIEVE A SPEECH BY AN AUTHORITATIVE AEC MEMBER WHICH WE COULD THEN DISSEMINATE WOULD BE BEST VEHICLE FOR STATEMENT.

(C) IN VIEW OF SUCCESS OF DOUB VISIT, AND OF IMPORTANCE TO U.S. OF GETTING U.K. TO DECIDE IN FAVOR OF LWR'S, WE SUGGEST THAT THE AEC BE PREPARED TO SEND ANOTHER TEAM TO LONDON, PERHAPS IN THE LATTER PART OF JANUARY, IN ORDER TO DEAL WITH ANY POINTS THAT MAY ARISE AND THAT COULD INFLUENCE THE GOVERNMENT'S DECISION.

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## Message Attributes

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